

**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-IL) announced legislation today that would strip the Government of Thailand of its preferred trade and military status until generals restore an elected democratic government. The Thailand Democracy Act of 2007, (H.R. 2382) would end Thailand's designation as a major non-NATO ally until Congress can certify that democracy has been reinstituted. Thailand has been a major non-NATO ally since Dec. 30, 2003. The designation gives Thailand a range of benefits, including preferred American lending, participation in military exercises and preferential bidding on Department of Defense contracts.

"We have an obligation to stand with the Thai people to prevent future abuses by the unelected Government of Thailand," Congressman Kirk said. "A military dictatorship that disposes an elected government should not be considered a major non-NATO ally. This legislation would help restore democracy to Thailand, and set an example for other Asian militaries to stay out of politics."

On Sept. 19, 2006, the Thai military and police overthrew the elected government of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. General Sonthi Boonyaratkalin, leader of the military coup, suspended the constitution and dissolved the cabinet, both houses of the Thai Parliament, and the Constitutional Court.

"Democracies are best when they stick together. Unless we take this action, generals in other Asian nations may stop the trend toward democracy," said Kirk.

A copy of the legislation is included below.

#### A BILL

To promote a return to democracy in Thailand.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

## SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Thailand Democracy Act of 2007”.

## SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) On September 19, 2006, the military and police of the Kingdom of Thailand overthrew the elected government of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. At the time, the premier was in New York City for a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly.

(2) General Boonyaratkalin, leader of the military coup, suspended the constitution and dissolved the Cabinet, both houses of Parliament, and the Constitutional Court of Thailand.

(3) On September 21, 2006, the Department of State issued a statement saying, “There’s no justification for a military coup in Thailand or in anyplace else . . . we certainly are extremely disappointed by this action. It’s a step backward for democracy in Thailand.”

(4) Following the military coup, the United States suspended \$24 million in bilateral assistance to the Thai Government.

(5) Eight months after the military coup, despite promises by the military leaders to the contrary, Thailand still has not drafted a permanent constitution, held a referendum, or called for elections.

(6) On December 30, 2003, the President notified Congress that he designated the Kingdom of Thailand as a major non-NATO ally of the United States for purposes of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Arms Export Control Act.

(7) The benefits Thailand enjoys as a result of its major non-NATO ally status include—  
(A) allowing it to participate in certain counter-terrorism initiatives;

- (B) allowing it to purchase depleted uranium anti-tank rounds;
- (C) giving it priority delivery of military surplus;
- (D) loaning it equipment and materials for cooperative research and development projects and evaluations;
- (E) permitting it to use United States financing for the purchase or lease of certain defense equipment;
- (F) giving it preferential treatment with respect to reciprocal training;
- (G) expediting its export processing of space technology; and
- (H) permitting its corporations to bid on certain Department of Defense contracts for the repair and maintenance of military equipment outside the United States.

### SEC. 3. TERMINATION OF DESIGNATION OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND AS A MAJOR NON-NATO ALLY.

(a) **TERMINATION OF DESIGNATION.**—The designation of the Kingdom of Thailand as a major non-NATO ally of the United States pursuant to paragraph (1) of section 517(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961

(Presidential Determination No. 2004–16; 69 Fed. Reg. 2053) shall be deemed to have been terminated by the President pursuant to paragraph (2) of such section irrespective of the requirement to notify Congress pursuant to such section.

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subsection (a) shall be effective for the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on the date on which the Secretary of State certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that the Government of Thailand has drafted a new constitution, held a national referendum to approve the new constitution and scheduled a date for national democratic elections to elect a new government under the new constitution.

(2) **DEFINITION.**—In this subsection, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

(c) **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize the President to issue a separate designation of Thailand as a major non-NATO ally of the United States pursuant to section 517(a)(1) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 for the period during which subsection (a) is in effect.